

II. REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A. Remarks.

Claims 1-5 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dines et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,694,754. Claims 8 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dines et al. '754 in view of Fritz et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,505,135. Claims 7, 9, 14, and 15 have been objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but were found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

B. Response

1. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) – Claims 1-5 and 10-12

Claims 1-5 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dines et al., '754. Claim 7 was found to allowable if rewritten in independent form, that claim has been amended to include the limitations of claims 1 and 5. Claims 1-3, and 5-6 have been cancelled with this paper and claims 4, 8, 10, 12, and 13 have been amended to now depend from claim 7. Because claim 7 has been amended as suggested and is allowable, and the remaining claims now depend from claim 7 (either directly or indirectly), it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) per Dines et al. '754 be reconsidered and removed.

Although claims 1-3 and 5, and 10-12 are being cancelled with this paper, Applicants maintain that by Dines et al. '754 do not anticipate these claims. Applicants respectfully disagree that fragmentation does not occur during use and further disagree that the rubber gasket of Dines et al., '754 acts as a reinforcing system.

2. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) – Claims 8 and 13

Claims 8 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dines et al. '754 in view of Fritz et al. '135. In response, claims 8 and 13 are being amended with this paper and now depend from claim 7. Claim 7, now amended to be in independent form, was found to be allowable if so amended. Thus it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 8 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dines et al. '754 in view of Fritz et al. '135 should be reconsidered and removed.

3. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7, 9, 14, and 15 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejection base claim, but were found to be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 1 and 5 and claims 9, 14, and 15 depend from claim 7 either directly or indirectly.

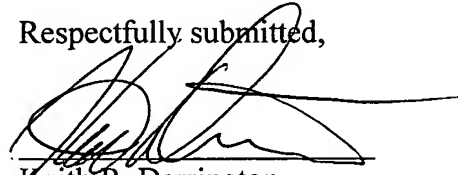
III. CONCLUSION

It is respectfully urged that in light of the above stated amendments and submissions that applicants' claims are patentable in light of the prior art. Claim 7 has been amended into independent form, and the remaining claims depend from claim 7 either directly or indirectly. Thus the rejections of the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be reconsidered and removed. It is believed that the foregoing response is full and complete. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the instant application in light of the foregoing response and amendments.

Should the Examiner have any questions, comments or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' representative by telephone or fax.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith R. Derrington', written over a horizontal line.

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